

THE OLDEST SONGS

the bright sunlight against the snows
of a long winter is almost blinding, so
there is no thought of going outdoors
without sunglasses. i sit on the front
steps peeling an orange, then eating
all the neat little sections until
only peels are left. these
i throw out onto the hard covering
of snow. but the steps
are too cold, and i cannot stay
out here any longer. this
sunlight, it is more intense
than the sunlight of july.
the july sunlight is taken
and soaked and darkened
into green. march sunlight
is primarily converted
into a blinding atmosphere.
the birds won't even fly
about that much, actually only
going from branch to branch
in the same tree, calling out
warnings to one another:
the earth's
oldest songs.

QUIET POTATOES

another snowstorm, perhaps turning out
to be the largest yet of the season, and
there have been many backbreaking storms
already this year. close to midnight i
step out onto the front porch and watch
the flakes coming down, and while out there
i get to see one of the mammoth plows
rumbling by. but because i am on the brink
of catching a cold i don't stay out long.
after making sure everything's closed up
downstairs, i climb the stairs and
once in the bedroom shed my outer clothes.
in the post office this afternoon people talked
about the expectant terrors
of the current storm. i didn't say anything.
and i especially didn't make a peep
admitting just how jubilant i have been
this winter. harsh stares would've
driven me away. i crawl into a bed
piled with every blanket i own.
yes, i'm in complete agreement with
how the world, it seems, comes to

a standstill. it is a peacefulness
easily placed in the category
of blessings. i don't want to see
the green yet. the seasons
of insects and animals and more
people cannot hold a candle
to winter when it comes to sheer quiet.
none of the neighbors are here
during the winter months.
the house floats alone in dunes
of snow. other houses
in the distance are not visible
at night because they are dark.
usually the glass
on the kitchen counter
has vodka in it.
vodka from poland,
made from potatoes.
quiet potatoes.

SHE LOVED MOZART

a sadness to it, sure, this pulling
further and further away from the world.
i remember when i was living at the
motel, there was this woman who
used to come and go, sometimes staying
up to months at a time. every so
often i'd go over to her room and
sit around and talk with her.
the room would smell from clove cigarettes
and dirty wash. and over the
lampshades clothes were placed to
bring the light down to a remarkable
dimness, which never failed to
charm me and attract me, as
a moth, any moth you like,
is drawn to a bright light.
but, i suppose moths are drawn to
dim light also. anyway, i
find myself becoming more and more
like this woman, and it's scary.
except for the dirty wash part.
if anything, i'm fanatical about wash.
dishes too. the car i let
go to hell. i never weed.
and like this woman i'm letting the
place slowly go dark.
she died while she was at
the motel, from cancer.
some nights i'd find her
crossing the parking lot